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ABSTRACT

The Alternative Teacher Education Program (ATEP) was developed at Kent State University to attract and motivate academically talented students to enter the teaching profession. The project targeted four major improvements. These include: (1) the establishment of a systematic plan for the identification, recruitment, and selection of able teacher candidates; (2) the creation of four inquiry-based seminars; (3) the establishment of field experience under the guidance of mentor teachers; and (4) the establishment of an individualized system of advisement in teacher education. The intention of this project was to produce beginning teachers who are competent in both the art and science of teaching, mentors who are better prepared to support the development of teachers, and university faculty who can present preservice teachers with research-based information and opportunities for inquiry. This report describes the development and implementation of the program. An evaluation and assessment of progress is presented as well as major outcomes. The implications of the ATEP for others is discussed and the institutional features of the project are considered. The overall strengths and limitations of the ATEP are briefly outlined. (JD)

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ED307235

PREPARING ACADEMICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS FOR TEACHING

FINAL REPORT

PART A: PROJECT PORTRAYAL

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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
KENT, OHIO

FINAL REPORT

FEBRUARY, 1989

SP 031140

PROJECT PORTRAYAL

Introduction

Teacher education has been frequently criticized for its inability to attract and sustain the interest of academically able students. Both national reports and institutional self-study have confirmed the validity of this popular criticism. The Alternative Teacher Education Program was created to develop a plan to attract and motivate academically talented students to enter the teaching profession. The project targeted four major improvements. These include: 1) the establishment of a systematic plan for the identification, recruitment and selection of able teacher candidates; 2) the creation of four inquiry based seminars; 3) the establishment of field experiences under the guidance of mentor teachers; and 4) the establishment of an individualized system of advisement in teacher education. The intention of this project was to produce beginning teachers who are competent in both the art and craft of teaching, mentors that are better prepared to support the development of teachers, and university faculty who can present preservice teachers with research-based information and opportunities for inquiry.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

Year One

During the first year of the project, teams of classroom teachers, Honors students and faculty members from the College of Education and Honors College engaged in deliberation and study to determine what research-based knowledge is of most worth to those learning to teach. The team investigated alternative organizational and contextual approaches for teacher education.

The planning process used to initiate the ATEP project included three groups identified as key informants for determining what aspects of the teacher education program ought to be addressed in the interest of preparing bright students for teaching. Members of the three groups were participants of the collaborative planning council, recent graduates identified as high achievers who were teaching and honor's students offered their perception of need. Each of these groups generated their own statements in response to the question, "What should an alternative teacher education program for academically talented students be?" Both the Planning Council and the on-campus student group dealt with this question through face-to-face discussion using the nominal group process technique (N.G.T.) as described by Delberg, Van de Ven and Gustafson (1975). Following data generation and item weighing, Cruickshanks' (1984) categories were used to identify key areas of interest for project attention. The clusters were named (1) Recruitment, Assessment and Selection of Teacher Education Students; (2) Field

Experiences and Mentorships (3) Alternative Program Plan; (4) Advisement. These clusters were used to formulate "second generation" questions which were mailed to recent graduates (n=110). Responses from graduates were used by the Planning Council in their next round of decision making. Rather than selecting one of the four areas identified during the initial process, the group decided to attend to all four areas. Four subcommittees were formed and each group was given specific responses from the assessment process and a set of readings related to the designated area. Each group deliberated and developed a set of recommendations to guide the design of the program. These included: (1) the development and implementation of a systematic plan for the identification, recruitment and selection of able teacher candidates; (2) the development and implementation of an individualized teacher preparation program which has at its core a sequence of research based seminars; (3) the development and implementation of field experiences in conjunction with core seminars under the guidance of mentor teachers; and (4) the development and implementation of a co-advising system to ensure communication among the students, professors from liberal arts, professors from education and school-based mentors.

Each of the improvements, determined through collaborative planning, offers marked departure from traditional teacher preparation efforts at Kent State University. There had not been a concerted effort to identify and recruit bright students for

teaching. Only minimal selection criteria had been established for admission into the profession. The traditional curriculum patterns had been rigidly specified largely through state mandates which allow for few electives. Field experiences have been haphazard and controlled primarily by education faculty with little input from school personnel. Advising has been done through centralized program counselors rather than academic faculty members. None of the education coursework at the baccalaureate level has emphasized research or encouraged a reflective, inquiry orientation.

Collectively the collaborative planning structure produced a design for an alternative program that has the potential for offering a very different approach to teacher preparation at our institution.

Implementation

The following plan of work describes how each of the four improvements were implemented. Detailed in the plan are facilitating objectives, activities, roles and responsibilities of collaborators and staff. A calendar of events is provided in an Appendix. Additional explanatory remarks are provided below:

Improvement 1: Systematic Plan for Identification, Recruitment and Selection of Able Teacher Candidates.

Since there is no general college at Kent State University entering freshmen are admitted directly into the undergraduate college of their choice. Lists of students who have been

academically successful in college were procured from College of Arts and Sciences, College of Fine and Professional Arts, College of Education, and the Honors College. Personal letters were mailed to each student inviting them to apply for the program. A colorful program brochure was developed which describes key features of the program. Letters and brochures were mailed to all faculty in the aforementioned colleges.

To be admitted to the program the following criteria were specified:

- Verbal fluency, both written and oral
- Critical thinking ability
- Interest in and commitment to teaching
- Interpersonal aptitude

Upon indicating interest in applying to the program students are sent a detailed application form. The form requires three types of writing (descriptive, expository, and critical) as well as a detailed personal history. Upon completion of the application, students are screened by a selection committee composed of representatives from the College of Education, the Honors College, and the public schools. Applicants are ranked for suitability to the program. In cases where a clear determination could not be made students are invited for an interview with the selection committee. Application and selection occur annually. The program is open to all who meet selection requirements regardless of class rank or teaching focus.

Retention in the Alternative Program in Teacher Education is determined by four criteria: (1) ability to maintain required grade point average; (2) meeting college-wide professional standards (English Composition, Speech, Mathematics, Speech and Hearing, Pre-professional Skills Test); (3) recommendation by professional educators (College of Education faculty, Liberal Arts faculty, and school-based personnel); and (4) continuous self-assessment.

During the first year of implementation four hundred fifty (450) potential students were contacted, 132 requested applications for the project, 55 completed and returned the applications and 30 candidates were chosen for entry into the program. Follow-up interviews with candidates who requested applications but did not complete them (N=77) and with students who were selected for participation in ATEP were completed to assess the positive and negative attributes of the recruitment and selection process from the students' point of view.

Improvement 2: Alternative Program Plan for Able Teacher Candidates

The purpose of this experimental program is to provide an individualized approach to teacher preparation which emphasizes inquiry and experience. The program, which meets all requirements specified by the Ohio Department of Education for an experimental program, provides the basis for students with high academic ability to complete a teacher preparation sequence that

integrates classroom, schoolroom, and research regardless of subject matter expertise or grade level specialization. Successful completion of the program permits the granting of the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education and may facilitate graduation with Honors.

Throughout the development of this experimental program it was assumed that the abilities of students with high academic aptitude would allow them to grasp and apply concepts essential for understanding the nature of teaching, learning, and the conduct of schools more readily than students with lesser ability. It was assumed that students with high academic ability might have had a breadth of life experiences which would facilitate the development of skills necessary for teaching thus allowing a more individualistic preparation for the profession. Further, it was assumed that students interested in participating in an experimental program would be risk-takers and knowledge-seekers, thus an inquiry approach to teaching seemed most appropriate.

The Alternative Program in Teacher Education has two components: studies in the liberal arts and professional studies. A broad background of coursework in the liberal arts was deemed essential for the teacher as a model educated person. Such studies provide the student an understanding of the structure of knowledge generally and specifically and a depth of understanding in one particular discipline. The liberal education component of

this program coupled with knowledge gleaned from the study of a specific discipline comprises approximately 80 hours of the student's college program.

The professional studies component is structured across a two year period of time and balances campus-based classwork with school-based experience. Three specific seminars are the core of pedagogical learning: Inquiry into Teaching (Semester I), Inquiry into Learning (Semester II), and Inquiry into Schooling (Semester III). Each of these seminars provides a specific approach to inquiry (phenomenological, empirical, and critical) as students deal with the development of concepts necessary for becoming effective teachers. While students are enrolled in seminars they participate in practica which allow for the validation of concepts learned in seminars. University faculty who teach the seminars are selected for participation based on scholarship and teaching ability. The professional studies component of the program culminates in a semester-long internship for in-depth teaching practice. During this time students participate in a research seminar which will assist them in formulating a research project. Total hours in this program component are 26.

Program electives are available to students through individual advisement. Approximately 25 hours of coursework are left to student and adviser discretion. The adviser may delete, substitute or waive traditional program requirements based on student expertise, or experiential background. For the student preparing to teach in the elementary school these hours may be in

specific methods instruction. For the student interested in secondary school teaching these hours might be additional hours in a discipline. Students might elect to spend a semester abroad or pursue an individual project.

From this program students becoming teachers will:

- Demonstrate an appreciation for general knowledge as a foundation for teaching
- Examine alternative approaches to knowledge generation, decision-making, and problem solving as they relate to teaching, learning, and the conduct of schools
- Become action researchers
- Model educated persons
- Demonstrate independence in their continual pursuit for knowledge about teaching
- Exhibit skills deemed necessary for effective classroom teaching

Improvement 3: Field Experience Under the Guidance of Mentor Teachers

Because the program design calls for a balance of classroom and schoolroom experience, the planning committee felt it necessary to establish specific recommendations and guidelines for the selection, orientation, and remuneration of cooperating school personnel.

For the duration of the student's professional preparation (approximately two years) classroom teachers act as mentors for the students. Through a matching process students and mentors are linked. Mentor responsibilities include orienting students to the full range of teaching duties, monitoring the student's progress throughout the professional preparation sequence, presenting occasional guest lectures at seminars, and acting as a professional adviser. For accepting these responsibilities, the teachers received fee waivers to use as they choose for graduate education. They are also invited to participate in extra mural colloquia for mentors and students each semester.

Nominations were sought from Planning Council members, student teaching supervisors, key school district personnel and building principals. The nominees attend an orientation session to learn about the program and plan for complimentary field experiences.

Additional classroom teachers were sought to provide sites and feedback to students during practica and internship semester. Sites for students' experiences were selected to reflect cultural and socio-economic diversity. Each ATEP student is given a list of potential mentors in their field. The ATEP student and potential mentor interview one another. When the match is agreed upon the ATEP office is notified. Each school district retains final approval of the match.

Based on student expertise, confidence and skill developed a joint contract is written between the mentor and student. The contract establishes the intended goals and activities for the semester. It provides a method to monitor progress and is placed on file in the ATEP office (Appendix E).

Improvement 4: Co-Advising System

Central to the success of an experimental, individualized approach to teacher preparation is the quality of advisement and instruction. Advisement occurs in two phases: advisement in the liberal arts and advisement in professional preparation. It is expected that all students in this program will receive guidance about course selection in the disciplines through a content area specialist.

Upon admission to this program students were asked to interview three faculty members acquainted with this project and select advisers who will guide the individualization of the student's program. Each semester advisers meet to discuss student progress and to address concerns related to an individualized program approach. In addition, advisers may participate with school-based mentors in extra mural colloquia. At the point at which students are entered into their internship, advisers may act as supervisors of that experience and can work with the student to develop the research problem.

Due to adviser assignments not all ATEP students had the opportunity to select an adviser. In some cases only one adviser was available and was assigned to the student.

The faculty adviser designs, along with the student, an individual program prospectus which reflects the students' area of talent, previous learning experiences and additional areas of interest. Advisers have the authority to waive, substitute or delete coursework. They also recommend enrollment in graduate courses, upper division courses, and individual investigations.

Evaluation and Assessment of Progress

To determine the relative impact of the improvements described continuous documentation was necessary. The following information indicates criteria for judging the success of each improvement and the data collection strategies or sources of evidence to determine whether the criteria have been met. Use of a variety of data sources allowed for triangulation of evidence to determine the relative strength of progress or accomplishment.

Not evident is the assessment of our collaborative structure, the Planning Council. The effectiveness of the Council is documented by meeting attendance, participation in decision-making, anecdotal impressions of how the collaborative process has worked and the Planning Council Evaluation Questionnaire. This documentation was continued as the purpose of the Planning Council shifted from planning to monitoring to

revising the project's direction. This was not included in the improvements because collaborative planning was not viewed as a primary, project specific improvement but rather an improvement expected of all projects since it was required in the R.F.P.

It was expected that all participants in the project-- project staff, students, faculty members, mentors, and Planning Council members -- would be data sources. We relied most heavily, though, upon the students and their impressions for evidence of progress in the program. The project director and project coordinator have primary responsibility for organizing data collection and analyzing the progress of our effort. Regular progress reports have become part of the Planning Council meetings.

Improvement 1: Systematic Plan for Identification, Recruitment and Selection of Able Teacher Candidates

The evaluation of this component entailed both qualitative and quantitative data sources. Identification involved a review of the literature on characteristics of able learners, a survey of outstanding graduates of the traditional program, structured interviews of the accepted candidates as well as those who declined participation and collection of standardized data (ACT, SAT, transcripts, Measure of Epistemological Reflection, references employing a rating scale).

The evaluation of the recruitment procedures was conducted by reviewing the literature with regard to effective recruitment

practices, a survey of other Institutions of Higher Education was undertaken and structured interviews with students were conducted.

Similar data along with anecdotal records was collected with regard to the selection procedures. Multiple data points allowed the project staff to compose a global picture of the component.

Improvement 2: Alternative Curriculum Plan

Four criteria were specified as indicators of the success of this component. Student achievement in coursework was evaluated through the use of observation, seminar evaluation, scores on the Pre-professional Skills Test (PPST), transcripts and the Learning to Teach Autobiography (LTA) composed by graduating interns.

The development of student inquiry processes was evaluated through the completion of anecdotal records by students and seminar professors, observation and implementation of an action-oriented research project, pre/post testing using the MER, and analysis of the LTA.

Student satisfaction with the course was assessed each seminar through departmental questionnaire, ATEP questionnaire, observation and on-going analysis of journal entries. Retention in the program also indicated level of satisfaction.

Improvement 3: Field Experience under the Guidance of a Mentor Teacher

Multiple data collection instruments and sources of evidence were used to substantiate the success of this improvement. Student competence in teaching performance was documented through the use of observation, completion of anecdotal records, and self-analysis. This information was compiled by the mentor, university supervisor and ATEP student.

Mentor and student satisfaction was ascertained through the use of questionnaires, observation of semester meetings and analysis of student journal entries. The ability of the mentor to structure the field experience is documented by the use of student-mentor contracts and observations of mentor meetings.

Improvement 4: Co-Advising System

Student and adviser surveys, anecdotal records and structured adviser meetings were held to determine the progress and success of Improvement 4. The variability or degree of individualization is documented by a review of student transcripts and prospectus.

II. MAJOR ISSUES, STRATEGIES AND COLLABORATION APPROACHES

The purpose of this project was to design an alternative teacher education program which reflected four of Cruickshanks' (1984) categories: the individual characteristics of teacher candidates, the teacher preparation curriculum, the instructional

experiences of teacher candidates and the external or school-based context in which teacher preparation occurs. These categories provided a framework to address three areas of concern: the quality of students entering teacher education, articulation between the College of Education and other colleges within the comprehensive university and extended collaboration of public school educators in teacher preparation. The general project objectives were:

- to design, implement and evaluate a sequence of accelerated coursework for academically able students interested in teaching.
- to incorporate a research orientation into teacher preparation courses which enables new teachers to view themselves as action-oriented researchers.
- to add sustained field experiences that require students to apply knowledge gleaned from research in early field practice and culminating internship.

As a result of a 1983 self-study in the College of Education and more specifically a series of meetings with high achieving students in teacher preparation, several conclusions were drawn:

- academically able (g.p.a. 3.3 or higher) students are generally dissatisfied with the content and amount of professional education coursework.
- only 30 of 610 students enrolled in the Honor's College expressed interest in teaching as a career.

- The College of Education offered no honor's coursework
- The College of Education offered no team taught or interdisciplinary courses
- Both high ability students and practicing cooperating teachers want more contact time; practicing teachers wanted more influence on the content of professional coursework.

The aforementioned issues clearly supported the creation and implementation of the Alternative Teacher Education Program (ATEP).

While the foci of the project did not change during the three years, gradual improvements elaborated and clarified the original goals. The creation of a Planning Council based on Griffin's (1982) notion of participatory decision-making was instrumental in refining the goal structure. The original Planning Council was composed of public school teachers, Honor's students and faculty members from the College of Education and Honor's College. They began planning by investigating the question "What should a teacher preparation program be for academically talented students?" Based on their deliberations and review of the related literature four components were identified as integral to the success of the project goals. In order to implement a program for academically able students, the Planning Council recommended the formation of a subcommittee which had the task of designing a systematic plan for the

identification, recruitment and selection of ATEP students. A second subcommittee was formed to study and recommend a plan for continuous field experiences under the guidance of a master teacher. The creation of an alternative curriculum plan became the focal point of the third subcommittee and creating a plan for co-advisement of ATEP students was the final subcommittee task. After examination of the related research literature and the deliberations of the full Planning Council all four improvements were adopted as part of ATEP. The Council was able to plan efficiently by sharing information, tasks and making compromises. As Greenfield (1983) notes, having all parties benefit as a result of their involvement was instrumental to ensuring the success of the council. Most recently one council member summed it up this way:

"Let me add a personal note: I have thoroughly enjoyed my work on the Advisory Committee and have learned a great deal from the experience. I strongly support the concept of the ATEP program and believe that its implementation for the past three years has been largely successful. I am pleased that the program will continue."

As the implementation phase began the original Planning council, with a few changes, became the Advisory Council. The changes were in membership and functioning. Due to other commitments two members left the Council and were replaced by members from cooperating school districts. In addition, members from the Office of Field Experiences and the Office of Student Services were incorporated into the Advisory Council. ATEP students from Cohort I and then II were included. The function

of the Council became that of monitoring and evaluating the implementation phase. Two scheduled meetings were held each semester of Year II and III; additional subcommittee and full Council meetings were held as needed. Continuous oral and written feedback was provided to the Council with the participation of seminar faculty, mentors and students during Council meetings. Specific issues were raised and addressed by the Council. For example, concerns over lack of written communication from the project to ATEP students resulted in a recommendation for an ATEP student-faculty handbook. A recommendation from the subcommittee on Improvement 4, Advisement, accepted responsibility for creating the handbook to be implemented in Fall 1988.

As the final report was compiled, the Advisory Committee decided to divide into the four original subcommittees in order to assess the progress and effectiveness of the program during the past three years. Each subcommittee surveyed all of the assessment data collected during the project and compiled a written report for the ATEP staff. The subcommittee on Improvement 2, Alternative Teacher Program, surveyed students from Cohort I and Cohort II in Spring 1988 in regard to: the research skills gained by participation; the opportunity to broaden their liberal arts education through ATEP; the combination of theoretical and practical information provided to students; field experiences and evaluation. Results specified in the Assessment Section of the report will not be enumerated here. Suffice it to say the positive results far outweigh the negative.

While the collaborative efforts of the Advisory Council provided the overall guidance to and evaluation of the Alternative Teacher Education Program, numerous other aspects were instrumental to the overall success of the program. One of the original goals was to attract and retain bright students to our teacher preparation program. In each of the recruitment years 53 and 52 student respectively applied for admission to ATEP. Thirty students were accepted for Cohort I and 26 for Cohort II. The retention rate has generally been high. Of the original 56 students, 13 have decided to withdraw from the program, no one has been dropped. Exit interviews of students leaving ATEP indicated satisfaction with the program but a change in career orientation or personal problems which took precedence over continuing in ATEP. In five cases the two year time commitment was considered prohibitive.

The program has succeeded in its goal to develop an accelerated series of coursework which has as its base a reflective research orientation. These courses have been institutionalized as part of the ongoing program at Kent State University. The individualization of student programs is also proceeding, although not as rapidly as the implementation of coursework. It appears as the faculty grows more accustomed to the role of advisor, in a true sense, they are more willing to waive, substitute or delete traditional coursework. The additional orientation meetings, creation of the student-faculty handbook and appointment of a within department contact

person has contributed to increasing adviser effectiveness.

Summative adviser evaluations were positive. Comments include:

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my ATEP advisee. I have had the opportunity to watch her grow in skills and confidence. The closeness has been, I think, mutually rewarding."

"I think ATEP is a promising program if more structure in the form of guidelines can be provided."

"I hope ATEP continues for years to come. Many of our students need such an alternative."

Increases in contact among programs as well as among colleges has also become apparent. A faculty research committee has been established to study the common attributes among four alternative programs, two undergraduate and two graduate, currently available at Kent. In order to appropriately create an individual program plan, faculty members from the College of Education and other colleges have developed communication links.

The third broadly defined goal for the project was to involve the public schools in a collaborative effort to prepare teacher educators. In addition to the Planning/Advisory council, the placement of ATEP students with mentors in 12 public school systems has provided another vehicle for increased collaboration. From the onset of the project, which included key school-based personnel on all major decisions of planning and implementation, to the final evaluation of the project, the university and public schools have established an effective collaborative effort. Instrumental in the design of the project were teachers and administrators who accepted new roles as the Planning Council

became advisory in nature. Teachers became mentors and administrators become members of the Selection Committee by personal choice. Through the procedures used for selection of mentors school personnel became aware of Kent's efforts to recruit bright students into teaching and began efforts to recommend master teachers to the program. In another dimension, the mentors themselves established collaborative efforts not only with the university but also with one another. Meeting at least once a semester, mentors participated in group sessions designed to discuss their concerns, answer their questions and for the ATEP staff to receive feedback. Mentors found these meetings beneficial as demonstrated by their written evaluation comments and continued attendance during the two year program. Not only did the mentors establish links to Kent students but also to ATEP staff and faculty advisers. The mentors have requested information on adviser assignments and a meeting between mentors and advisers. These requests will be fulfilled in Fall 1988. In at least one case the mentor and adviser discussed the program prospectus and revised it according to the skills demonstrated by the student during field experience. We expect the professional judgment of the mentor will be considered as the program prospectus is designed by the university adviser. Supervision of the internship is assigned to the faculty adviser when possible. This also facilitates collaboration on the monitoring and evaluation of student progress. Unanticipated collaboration has also occurred. Mentors within district and

cross-district have established linkages . Informal exchanges of information, concerns, and suggestions have been documented.

The project goals and improvements have been successfully designed and implemented. The Alternative Teacher Education Program is a viable means to attract and retain bright students in a teacher preparation program. Individualizing the preparation program has contributed to the retention of academically able students. The accelerated coursework delivered in an alternative format has encouraged the development of reflective, inquiry-oriented teachers. Quantitative and qualitative reports indicate the use and development of reflective thinking skills. Self reflective thoughts such as "when I began teaching I worried about how I was going to get there. Now I worry about how I am going to get my student there" show evidence of the level of thought and reflection which were developed. An extensive (two-year) field experience has been established for each student under the guidance of a mentor teacher. The advisement system is still being refined. However, Year III suggested improvements should contribute to the success of the advisement component. Spontaneous as well as planned collaboration has provided the foundation for joint ownership of the ATEP project. Planning/Advisory Council members, mentors, faculty and ATEP students expressed strong positive regard for the program. ATEP is considered by those involved an "exceptional" program; "a model for educating teachers."

III. MAJOR OUTCOMES

The purpose of this section is to describe the major outcomes of the Alternative Teacher Education Program. Each of the major outcomes with supporting evidence is described fully in the Program Assessment Section of this report.

Looking briefly at each major section can give one a sense of the importance of each of the components. Elaborated upon earlier, the collaboration process was deemed successful as evidence by sustained participation of the members, the high quality of decision-making, the satisfaction of participants, and willingness to change. Each of these characteristics have been documented in the literature (Wood, 1984) as primary indicators of successful collaboration.

Reflecting upon successful recruitment and retention of academically able students, one notes the effectiveness of the project. The pool of applicants had an average grade point average of 3.4 or better and American College Test (ACT) of 25 or higher. Students selected for the program evidenced skills such as: independence; analysis and synthesis of information; fluency in written and oral expression; critical thinking ability; and commitment to teaching. The retention rate to the Alternative Program was approximately 76%, considerably higher than our 46% retention rate in the traditional program.

The literature pertaining to intellectually gifted students suggests attention be paid to such attributes as rate of learning, ease of learning, levels of abstract thinking, critical

thinking and ability to process information. It is apparent from the assessment and evaluation data of seminars and field experiences that these attributes contribute to their successful completion of the Alternative Teacher Education Program. Comments from seminar instructors, mentors and students themselves substantiate the differences in learning characteristics. The reflective nature of the bright student can be developed by providing a challenging interactive environment which integrates theory and practice. ATEP students consider the act of learning to teach as "challenging", "forcing me to look at myself in a new light", or to "take a real deep look inside yourself, examine what you believe, and establish a personal plan for defending the position you have taken." The seminars allowed students to discover "relevant points especially when it came to actual problems faced in the classroom." Public school teaching provided a way for ATEP students to tie together their "intellectual strengths with their social convictions." The development of a problem-solving inquiry orientation to teaching is apparent throughout evaluations, journal citations and the Learning to Teach Autobiographies.

As noted previously, effective and appropriate mentorships were established for all ATEP students. The sustained participation of the mentors, their recruitment and nomination of potential mentors, as well as their positive evaluation of the experience are indicators of the successful outcome of this component. It is possible to recruit master teachers from the

public schools to work in a sustained experience with pre-service teachers. The mentorships are viewed as personally and professionally positive. Benefits to mentors go beyond the remuneration received. Personal development, self-analysis and "the ability to see the classroom through a fresh perspective" were all comments made. Mentors viewed this relationship as a means to share their commitment and professional skills with a new generation of teachers. The student view of the mentorship is overwhelmingly positive. The learning, guidance, support and personal development that were part of the mentorship are key factors in its success.

The advisement process was developed more slowly than other components addressed. The outcomes from this process are somewhat more nebulous than those cited earlier. Cohort I students relied heavily on the ATEP staff for advisement. Citing "lack of knowledge" about the innovative program was the main reason given for not establishing contact with an adviser. Advisers in turn did not always understand their role and felt uncomfortable designing an individualized program, (i.e., "how far can I individualize and still meet the standards.") Cohort II students and faculty advisers achieved a greater degree of success. Communication links were established by the ATEP staff through memorandums and orientation meetings. Students and advisers expressed greater satisfaction at the end of Year II. An unanticipated outcome of this component has been the formation of several subcommittees to study the traditional teacher

education program. The key components of this program as well as three other alternative preparation programs at Kent are being studied to determine which components would be beneficial to the education of all preservice teachers. Specifically, the formation of cohort groups, the intense continuous field experience under the guidance of master teachers and differentiation of the curriculum are being reviewed.

The data provided in the Assessment section of this report strongly support the Alternative Teacher Education Program designed and implemented at Kent State University. Outcomes of this project indicate:

- bright students can be attracted to teacher education
- curriculum can be effectively designed to develop a reflective perspective about teaching
- mentors can be used to provide a continuous field experience which combines theory and practice
- individualized educational programs which reflect the unique learning needs of academically talented students can be used in teacher preparation programs; and
- long term successful collaboration can take place between the university and public schools, and within the university between professors of education and professors of arts and sciences.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHERS

The implications of the Alternative Teacher Education Program are multi-leveled, impacting a wide variety of situations. For the purpose of this section we will continue to use the four major improvements as guidelines.

The call for change in teacher education continues and is reaching all facets of the population. An essential prerequisite to successful reform is the preparation and retention of high quality teachers for our nation's schools. Coupled with the need for high quality teachers has been the negative perception of teacher education programs and careers in teaching. Changing the negative, although not always warranted, perception of teacher education programs held by many academically able undergraduates is necessary to attract and retain these students. If academically able students are to pursue careers in teaching, the teacher preparation curriculum must be sufficiently demanding intellectually; the instruction by the teacher education faculty must be sufficiently stimulating; and the experiences students have during their college preparation must be sufficiently challenging for students to sustain interest in a program of preparation for teaching. The curriculum must give attention to the unique learning abilities of bright students. This includes: rate and pace of instruction; well developed abstract and critical thinking skills; the level and type of content; and the need to provide intellectual peer group interaction.

Students perceived ATEP as flexible as opposed to the lock-step program in traditional education; receptive to their previously learned knowledge as opposed to viewing them as "tabula rasa"; and supportive in the formation of cohort groups rather than being "just another student". Although these perceptions may be biased or untrue they are in fact real to many academically able students. Perhaps part of the problem could be remedied with appropriate communication about the traditional program but more likely reorganization based on current research about learning to teach is necessary. Additionally, teacher preparation courses should be staffed with the most effective teachers on the faculty. Faculty that are flexible, innovative, knowledgeable and who exemplify a reflective inquiry-based orientation should continued to be recruited.

Shaping a teacher preparation program from current research not only challenges the academically talented student but also contributes through their own studies of teaching and learning to the knowledge base. The addition of the research orientation to teacher education courses has enabled students to gain, interpret and apply new knowledge. Studies of teaching, studies of classroom, studies of learning and learners and studies of schools provide the theoretical foundation of knowledge. Extensive field experiences in conjunction with seminars allow students to observe, reflect and evaluate. This combination of theory and practice is effective in preparing highly regarded

beginning teachers. Follow-up studies should address the long-term retention of these students to the profession.

Integral to the development of a new curriculum is recognition of individual areas of interest and skills and the creation of a unique teacher preparation program which reflects our knowledge about learners. The current trend in public education is establishing the path that the university should consider. Although not without negative aspects, since 1974, public school special education programs have been required to assess and plan for individual differences among students. Recognition of human diversity, intellectual differences, learning abilities and experiential background have often been ignored in teacher preparation programs. Too often review of coursework is undertaken when mandated by the state or external evaluation. Individualizing the program requires the time and professional expertise of the adviser. However, academically able students often acquire knowledge independently, as in the young man who purchased the text and engaged in discussions with his adviser and mentor to acquire needed information. Academically talented students process information differently drawing out relationships and rapidly transferring it to appropriate settings. Often these students are perceived as effective problem solvers using environmental cues coupled with theoretical knowledge to seek multiple solutions. The characteristics of this unique population require a differentiated program if we are to attract them to teacher education programs.

Mentorships with master professionals have long been acknowledged in other professions as instrumental in developing knowledge, role expectations, and understanding of the context of the profession. Studies of the effects of the classroom teacher on the performance and beliefs of preservice teachers have found the cooperating teacher in the school context to be a powerful mitigating force in learning to teach. The recruitment and selection of mentor teachers provide a means to contribute to the overall success of the preservice teacher. Not only does it contribute to the development of the preservice teachers it appears beneficial to the inservice teacher. Recognition by significant others for professional skills; commitment to the profession and ability to work with preservice teachers has a rejuvenating effect for the inservice teacher. The time required to effectively mentor can be problematic. However, master teachers show a willingness to make this commitment. The sustained field experience allows the mentor and preservice teacher to map out the developmental, professional and technical skills necessary to become proficient. This is in contrast to current practices which include random field experiences and too often inappropriate student teaching placements.

The final implication which can be excerpted from the Alternative Teacher Education Program is in regard to collaboration. The establishment of a Planning Council with representatives from all involved parties provided the key to successful planning implementation and evaluation. The Council

members established a trusting environment and demonstrated a willingness to accept responsibility for the project. The university-school based project reflected the joint concerns of university faculty and field based professionals. The university gained respect by giving respect; gained acceptance by giving acceptance and explored jointly the research on teacher education. The full impact of the Planning Council has yet to be measured. Students from the public schools are recommended for the ATEP project; mentors recruit new mentors; joint mentorships are established; university and school based faculty share program recommendations; and contacts which would not normally occur happen daily. The university reputation for training high quality students has been strengthened. Programs which intend to utilize collaborative strategies must recognize the joint planning and decision-making responsibilities seeking to maintain their integrity. In the advisory phase specific situations and recommendations must be enumerated in order to seek the advice of the Council. Finally, follow-up evaluations not only of the collaborative effort but also of the recommendations should be sought.

In summary, the university community should continue to recruit academically able students to the teaching profession. However, recruitment for a population with unique learning characteristics must be followed with programmatic changes which reflect these learning attributes or retention may decline. Mentor teachers have a powerful effect on the development of

preservice teachers. It appears so for average as well as academically able students. This joint effort to prepare teacher educators should be continued where present and established where necessary. Joint collaboration for planning, implementation and evaluation of university-school based programs is beneficial for all involved parties. It strengthens the commitment to sound teacher preparation; establishes mutual trust and respect; and provides a means to contribute to the development of the knowledge base on teacher preparation.

V. INSTITUTIONALIZATION FEATURES OF THE PROJECT

All major components of the ATEP project have been institutionalized as part of the teacher preparation program at Kent State University. This reflects the high quality of the program as well as Kent's commitment to recruiting high quality preservice teachers. The services provided to students, mentors and faculty will be continued under the auspices of the Department of Teacher Development and Curriculum Studies. The third Cohort has already been selected for September entry. Administrative responsibilities will continue to be handled by a project director, project coordinator and selected graduate assistants. Support and funding of the institutionalization is made possible by the Dean's Office and the department within which it is housed. The commitment to ATEP is firm and is expected to be sustained.

VI. OVERALL STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

"Lessons Learned"

In any project of this scope one becomes aware of things that should "be done differently" or need to be strengthened. While these factors impact the project none were sufficient to significantly diminish the effectiveness of the Alternative Teacher Education Program. The most effective components of the program were:

1. Collaboration with the public schools, mentors and Planning/Council members;
2. Identification, selection and retention of academically able students to teacher education;
3. Creation of a series of non-traditional seminars with an inquiry-research based orientation;
4. Development and implementation of extended field experiences;
5. Recruitment and retention of master teachers to serve as mentors for a two year time frame; and,
6. Establishment of an individualized approach to teacher education which reflects the unique learning abilities of academically talented students.

Limitations

The limitations of this project are mainly related to human resource factors. ATEP can be characterized as a labor intensive project. The time commitment, commitment of resources including faculty members must be made at the institutional level in order

to insure success. Students and mentors identified for participation in a special program have high expectations. Communication, resources and information are expected to be delivered rapidly as well as accurately. In order to sustain this level of functioning a program coordinator is mandatory. A secondary limitation is the number of students served. ATEP limits each cohort to approximately twenty-five students and while students who are not admitted initially are encouraged to reapply in successive years, in fact they seldom do. In all likelihood there are students who would benefit from participation in ATEP and are not served.

Several minor limitations are noted with regard to the field experience. As commented upon earlier, there was some difficulty with school-based administrative personnel. The conflict centered around the nomination procedure and notification of mentor candidates. The normal procedure of joint notification, to the school and mentor concurrently, was the central issue. Discussions with administrators and establishing an approved time-line of decision-making appears to have resolved the concern. The time and expertise necessary to establish approved procedures with each of the twelve participating school districts could be perceived as a limitation. Finally, the number of master teachers with a particular certification area and multiple sites needed for dual majors was a limitation. Although potential mentors were located in other districts, student transportation to the site was occasionally difficult to obtain.

In one case, an ATEP student convinced his parents to buy him a car using the program field experience as his rationale! Not all transportation problems were so easily solved.

Things To Do Differently

Three areas could be strengthened in the ATEP project: communications, selection and articulation. As in any innovative program communication links must be established and maintained. Linkages between the schools and ATEP; between ATEP students and faculty; and between mentors and ATEP participants were established successfully. However, confusion with expectations, required standards, and individualizing the program prospectus was evident with faculty advisers. It is difficult to anticipate all of the questions that can be asked particularly with the creation of a new program. The development of the student/faculty handbook based on the questions that have arisen over the past three years will facilitate effective communication with advisers. In truth, it would have been inappropriate to design the handbook prior to field testing the project.

The selection process has efficiently and effectively worked. However, students from freshman through senior level may be placed in the program. Selection of freshman and sophomore students can cause difficulties in scheduling. ATEP is a two year program which means students below the junior year will rotate out of ATEP for up to three semesters. This rotation breaks the continuity of the seminars and field experience as

well as decreasing the cohesiveness of the cohort group. The recommendation is to accept only entering juniors and/or to accept students at the end of their freshman year, provide program advisement (i.e. which courses not to take in the freshman - sophomore sequence) and bring them into ATEP when they reach junior standing.

Articulation of content among the seminar instructors is the final area which could be strengthened. Further efforts for joint planning, incorporation of research and comparison of content should be conducted to insure proper sequencing and delivery of knowledge.

Lessons Learned

Several lessons have been learned which impact not only the teacher preparation program at Kent State University but also have application to the national arena.

1. A collaborative Planning Council with broad based support can provide the direction necessary to design, implement and evaluate teacher preparation.
2. Academically talented students are attracted to teacher education and can be retained in a program specifically designed to meet their unique learning needs.
3. The conceptual focus on inquiry supported by the research base in teacher education provides an effective means to stimulate reflective thinking for preservice teachers.

4. Recognition of teacher expertise in the effective development of preservice teachers is rewarding not only to the student but also to the master teacher.
5. Formation of cohort groups establishes a sense of identity and acceptance among undergraduate students. It provides a personal and professional support system for the student.
6. Provisions for continuous assessment and evaluation of the alternative program components provides the necessary documentation to review existing teacher preparation programs. Elements found to be effective and appropriate can be considered for adoption throughout the teacher education program.
7. Opportunities for positive interaction among university faculty and school-based personnel increase credibility and contribute to on-going research in teacher education.

The Alternative Teacher Education Program was developed as a response to the need for high quality teachers in education. It has proven its effectiveness at Kent State University and has established a sound model that others may follow.

VI. PRODUCTS/DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES TO-DATE AND ANTICIPATED

The following products/dissemination activities have occurred:

FOR KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

- Course syllabus for Inquiry into Schooling
- Revised syllabi for Inquiry into Teaching
- Revised plan for student identification, recruitment, and selection
- Revised plan for mentor identification, recruitment, and selection
- Revised program description brochure
- Student/Faculty Handbook

FOR OTHERS INTERESTED IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Presentations at the following meetings:

- Ohio Association of College Teacher Education
- Ohio Association for Gifted Children
- Midwest Educational Research Association
- Midwest Holmes Group Network
- Association of Teacher Educators Annual Meeting
- American Educational Research Association

PAPERS IN PRODUCTION

- "Exploring the Relationship between Cognition and Reflection in Teacher Education"
 - Presented at ATE
 - Submitted to Network for dissemination
 - will submit similar paper to Journal of Teacher Education (thematic issue, March-April, 1989)
- "How Do We Identify, Recruit, and Select Bright Students for Teacher Preparation?"
 - Presented at AERA
 - Request by Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis for consideration
 - will submit similar paper to Journal for the Gifted Education

- "Mentoring Undergraduate Students"
 - manuscript in preparation for submission to Educational Leadership
- "Prospects for Individualizing the Preparation of Teachers"
 - manuscript in preparation

PRESENTATIONS/ARTICLES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

We would be interested and willing to contribute to writing projects or panels at regional or national meetings with the following topics in mind:

- Collaborative Planning
- Taking Risks in Teacher Education
- Characteristics of Students in Teacher Preparation
- Instructional Strategies Which Enhance Reflective Thinking
- Developing School-Based Mentors
- Other?

Journals with which I am familiar that have interest in teacher education:

Journal of Teacher Education
Action in Teacher Education
Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education
Educational Leadership
Kappan
Theory into Practice (Ohio State University thematic)
Peabody Journal of Education (Vanderbilt University thematic)

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Project Portrayal

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